



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF COMMON LIFE.

THERE is a very happy combination of literary taste and culture with scientific aptitude and research in Mr. Lewes, which enables him to be both instructive and entertaining in his writings. His range of study and reading is extensive and judicious, and his ready command over the diversified labor of others gives to his productions an encyclopædian character. In these days of sciolism when every scurvy literary mountebank overflows us with the scum of his brains, when writing is as cheap and common as floor-scrubbing, when every drop of ink is made to percolate according to a commercial standard, and every paper and journal, more or less, turned into a cesspool, we rejoice to meet with a man like Lewes, who is furnished naturally with a good brain, and who uses it with the dignity which belongs to it. Before entering on his present career of scientific labor, he had studiously familiarized himself with every branch of literature, and had written extensively but anonymously. Finding that the progressive forces of his intellect could not be confined within the literary boundary line, he boldly marched into the limitless region of science, to which no doubt the balance of his life will be devoted. His volume on "Sea-side Studies" may be called a success in blending the graceful romance of literature with the solid instruction of science, and in giving to the most abstract thoughts a verbal clothing at once clear and elegant.

The small tract before us is the first monthly installment of a very important work on a very important subject, coming home to the young and the old, to the rich and the poor, and to the humble as well as to the exalted. It concerns our common and imperfect nature, our physical, moral, and intellectual structure and functions. In the words of Mr. Lewes himself: "No scientific subject can be so important to man as that of his own life. No knowledge can be so incessantly appealed to by the incidents of every day, as the knowledge of the *processes by which he lives and acts*. At every moment he is in danger of disobeying laws, which, when disobeyed, may bring years of suffering, decline of powers, premature decay. Sanitary reformers preach in vain, because they preach to a public which does not understand the laws of life—laws as vigorous as those of gravitation or motion. Even the sad experience of others yields us no lessons, unless we understand the *principles* involved. If one man is seen to suffer from vitiated air, another is seen to endure it without apparent harm; a third concludes that 'it is all chance,' and trusts to that chance: had he understood the *principle* involved, he would not have been left to chance—his first lesson in swimming would not have been a shipwreck."

Idle exclamations as to the mysteries of our life are fast giving way to a studious and scientific exploration of them, to a healthy investigation of their origin and natures. We have tried theological and metaphysical methods without much satisfaction or instruction. We have traced

man, on the one hand, to a divine origin, and on the other to a source of general depravity, without in either case being over solicitous as to the true or false nature of our premises. Supernatural and natural modes of inquiry have been alternately resorted to without much thought as to their distinctive functions, or as to the fact that they mutually exclude each other. Man, as a subject of scientific investigation, as a theme within the scope of the human intellect, must be rigidly kept within the natural category of things, must be viewed as a component element in the great panorama of existence. He is unavoidably subject to all the conditions of time, place, and circumstances—a creature of past and present fatalities. Our fathers and mothers, our progenitors, our ancestors have been ruling powers in making us what we are. To one or all of them can we trace the complicated threads of good and evil which run through our whole system; on the escutcheon of one or all of them are deeply graven, transparently emblazoned, the terrible catalogue of our imperfections, infirmities, and sins, or the more happy traits of our better nature. Could each generation be made morally sensible of this fact, would they not cheerfully submit to the most trying modifications, the most severe self-abnegations, in order to renovate, to regenerate with a new spirit the life that they are destined to give forth. Surely, if we labor now so ardently to lay up material stores for those that are to live after us, why should we not labor still more ardently to give them wealth of spirit, affluence of soul, and rectitude of intellect. The one is transient, and often fatal in its results; the other permanent and immutably beneficial both as regards the present and the future.

If it be true that the medical profession is gradually sinking in knowledge and in moral dignity—if it be true that they use their calling not for the high purposes of humanity but for personal ambition and pelf—if it be true that they favor vicious tamperings with the natural functions and tendencies of nature, the diffusion of sound physiological notions among the masses becomes seriously imperative, religiously important. Any man capable of intelligent observation, of understanding his own experiences, can convert the symptoms of disease into diagnostic signs, can discriminate between the hereditary maladies of his constitution and those that may be acquired through exterior causes. Can the physician do much more than this, or can there be a better basis for therapeutical practice, or a more direct way of having a sound mind in a sound body. Clothing, food, recreation, domestic habits and social requirements are amenable to physiological laws, and can alone have their normal uses in obeying these laws. The fleeting but destructive fashions of the day are generally infractions of these laws, and our ignorance as to the conflict between them, smooths the way for our own destruction. To secularize knowledge is to diffuse it, is to take it out of an isoteric, and place it in an exoteric condition, is to make it the appanage of all, not the monopoly of a few. To this point all knowledge is gradually tending, and as it

moves on in this line, all professional bodies continue to lose their importance and their sway over the public mind.

To anatomy belongs the study of man's structure or organs, to physiology the operation or play of these organs, and to pathology the maladies peculiar to both the organs and functions of the human organism. Now, if we would understand our own frail temple, we have to study the action of external agents upon it, such as the air that feeds our lungs, the water that assuages our thirst, the food that repairs our wasting forces, the earth that moves under our feet, and the light, heat, and electricity that play around us, as well as the garments which cover us; and last, though not least, the family and social influences that have interwoven themselves into our educational training. To this we must add the study of our interior nature, such as our passions, affections, and needs, such as the structure and nature of our brain, heart, and nervous system, as they are determined by what we have inherited and by the modifications which they have undergone from the nature of our instruction and the course of our life. Thus the study of the human organism as it is affected by its own interior forces as well as by the external agents that surround it, becomes necessary to every man that would venture on an intelligent opinion as to the nature and workings of our feelings, thoughts, and actions. Man presents to physiology materials for its physical, moral, and intellectual consideration. We know that the ingestion and digestion of our food is very important to our material well-being; but even the result of this is subject to the nature and condition of our organs and functions. Do not the affections of our hearts and the thoughts of our intellects undergo the modifying effects of the peculiar structure of our organs and the peculiar play of their functions. Are we susceptible of any training, any education, any excellence that is not peculiar to and inherent in the very organs and functions with which our organism is invested by laws beyond our control. We see in the motion, sensibility and intelligence of people the most striking disparities, which can only be explained by reference to the variations in their organs and functions, allowances, of course, being made for the modifications to which they may have been submitted by external agents. Our anatomical machinery—made up of our nervous system, of our brain, of our medulla dorsalis, of our ganglionic and nerves—is dependent on material renovation, on development and reproduction, and is kept in constant motion by the complicated aggregate of our desires, passions, and moral and mental faculties whereof it is the spring and source. Thus we see life is made up of related things, and that no man is understood unless viewed through his ancestors behind him, his descendants before him, and his contemporaries around him, unless he is viewed as a link between the past, which has made him what he is, and the future, upon whose tide he is destined to float some elements of his nature. Hitherto men have busied themselves about their family genealogy as it has marked itself

upon the rind, the outward shell, as it has appeared conventionally in artificial and arbitrary classifications, in accidental and unmeaning conditions. Ought we not now to study the genealogy of the blood, as it has been made and modified, as it has been rendered pure or impure by the influence of race, of ancestry, and of our mothers and fathers? Would not this study clear up many of the theological mysteries of our nature, our moody melancholy, our black humors, our hallucinations, our hatreds, our hypocrisies, our discontent, our avarice, our substitution of passion for affection, of low cunning and trickery for moral rectitude, of pious profession for religious action, of dishonesty for honesty, of lust for continence, and of insanity for sanity? "If men," as La Bruyère says, "were temperate, chaste, and honest, what use would be to them the mysterious jargon of the doctors, which is a gold mine to those who know how to speak it? Lawyers, doctors, and clergy, what a downfall would you have if we would purify our blood, and become wise." We can scarcely hope to do this, however, so long as the aristocracy of our existence is mainly confined to high and unnecessarily expensive eating, to equally high and unnecessarily expensive lodging and clothing. This is giving to the lower part of our nature an undue ascension over the superior—wings to the body and not to the soul. It is difficult for man to hold the vegetative, the animal and the human parts of his nature in due subordination to each other, to maintain a normal gradation between the different stages through which his organism has developed itself, to give to each its due share of action, and to keep the one from encroaching upon the other. The influence of the vegetable and animal portion of our life is often overlooked in paying too exclusive attention to the higher decrees of humanity into which they issue. Man has no existence apart, for science is no theological apparition, but is related to every living element in the compound whole of the universe.

As Mr. Lewes progresses in the work he has undertaken, we shall have occasion to review in detail many of the points which we have here just glanced at, and in amplifying them we shall be able to give them greater simplicity of signification and a more concrete bearing.

To hunger—the simple need of our nature for food—he has given a treatment at once as interesting as instructive. Like all the fundamental instincts in our nature, it is difficult to define, difficult to shape out as a distinct branch of our constitution. Thirst—the need of introducing liquids into the alimentary canal—is treated with equal ability, and is shown to be still more terrible in its effects than hunger: Of Hunger Mr. Lewes says:

"Hunger, although beneficent, is no less terrible. When its progress is unchecked, it becomes a devouring flame, destroying all that is most noble in man. Hunger is a stimulus to crime, no less than to honest labor. It wanders through dark alleys, whispering desperate thoughts into eager ears; and it maddens the shipwrecked crew till they cast away all shame, all pity, all desire of respect, and perpetrate deeds which cannot be mentioned without horror. Hunger subjugates the

humanity in man, and makes the brute predominate. Impelled by this ferocious instinct, men have eaten their companions, and women have even eaten their own children. Hunger has thus a twofold character; beside the picture of the activities it inspires, we must also contemplate the picture of the ferocities it evokes."

Of Thirst Mr. Lewes says:

"During abstinence from food, the organism can still live upon its own substance, which furnishes all the necessary material, but during absence from liquid, the organism has no such source of supply within itself.

"Men have been known to endure absolute privation of food for some weeks, but three days of absolute privation of drink (unless in a moist atmosphere) is perhaps the limit of endurance. Thirst is the most atrocious torture ever invented by Oriental tyrants. It is that which most effectually tames animals. Mr. Astley, when he had a refractory horse, always used thirst as the most effective power of coercion, giving a little water as the reward for every act of obedience."

MOUNTAINS AND PRAIRIES.

SOME hearts are like the prairies, and some are like the hills,
And one may nurse the torrent, and one the silent rills.
The mountain for the shadows, the prairie for the sun,
And hearts for love and blessing were fashioned every one.

The solemn hills look lonely, but climb, and there will be
A beckoning and a welcome from glen, and crag, and tree,
Where falling waters echo the murmur of the pine,
And winds from dell to cavern sweep harmonies divine.

Forever smil'd the prairie, one sunlit round of green,
With streams and pools reflecting all day the golden sheen.
When summer comes to drape her in robes of scented bloom,
The splendor and the sweetness for longing leave no room.

Sometimes the hills are frowning, yet peace is in their shade
Among the cool, bright mosses that in the sun would fade,
The rills are pure that trickle among the jagged rocks,
Where many a hidden blossom the bending azure mocks.

The prairie has no secret to veil from earth or sky;
In boundless waste of beauty her open treasures lie;
Her southwind's dreamy whisper breathes warm from side to side;

But from her black tornados there is no nook to hide.

There is a beauteous terror enshrined among the hills;
The joy of perfect sunshine the prairie's bosom fills;
Her overflow of bounty enriches every guest;—
But strength is in the mountains, and deep, mysterious rest.

LUOY LAROOM.

It is not uncommon for the understanding to grasp a great general truth, without a minute perception of its elements, or of the various principles which it involves. Certain truths, especially to intellects of a certain class, are like the New World when first discovered by Columbus, of which he could little dream the vastness or undeveloped capabilities.—*Chulow.*

GREAT men undertake great things, because these are truly great—fools, because they imagine them easy.—*Vauvenargues.*

THOMAS SEDDON.

We learn something about Art by a study of works of Art, perhaps more may be learned of it by a study of artists, lives. Among interesting biographies lately published is that of Thomas Seddon, who was considered to be an artist of the Pre-Raphaelite school in England. Whether he adopted this title himself, or whether it was bestowed upon him, we know not; sufficient for our purposes, he was born an artist, and loved the profession better than any other that presented itself to him during his short career on earth. The excellent memoir from which we make extracts below—such extracts as partially exhibit the different sides of his character—is prepared by a brother. Thomas Seddon was born on the 28th August, 1821:

At the age of six years and a half he was sent to the school of the Rev. Joseph Barron, at Epsom, which was afterwards removed to Stanmore, in Middlesex, and there he remained till about sixteen years of age. The school was conducted on the Pestalozzian system. As the studies of the boys were considerably varied, and their attention was directed to the natural sciences as well as to the classics and mathematics, his mind was allowed to find and follow to a great extent its natural bias. During the holidays it was his chief delight to collect shells, minerals, birds' eggs, and insects, and in search of such curiosities he would range over wide tracts of country. A taste for drawing was early indicated. He was seldom without a pencil in his hand, and the blank leaves of lesson-books, as well as every available scrap of paper, were covered with sketches of animals and caricatures of his schoolfellows. He was fond of books, and often gained places in his class by the opportune remembrance of facts which he had read in Plutarch's Lives, and other favorite authors. When any scene or incident had fired his imagination, he strove to embody it in a picture; and there still exist some few drawings illustrative of "Marmion," full of spirit, and showing considerable knowledge of the dress and armor of the period.

After leaving school, he entered his father's business. The occupation, however, was uncongenial. From a sense of duty, and from an affectionate desire to assist his father, he did his utmost to master its details; but he could never conquer a deep-seated disinclination. His leisure was devoted to drawing, and in the hope of at once gratifying this taste, and rendering it subservient to professional purposes, his father sent him, in 1841, to Paris, to study ornamental art. Here he made great proficiency as a draughtsman and designer, and, after a year's sojourn, returned, speaking the French language as fluently as his own. But from his residence in that gay and seductive capital he derived no other benefit. Amongst idle acquaintances, he contracted a taste for pleasure and dissipation, which unnerved his mind, and made it doubly difficult to concentrate his energies on any irksome calling. Happily, however, he brought back a large measure of his habitual conscientiousness, and was kept from entirely deserting his post by his anxiety to serve his father.

His conscientiousness prompted him to analyze his feelings and motives—perhaps to a morbid extent; for example, the following "memorandum":

"My father objects that I could never live on fifty pounds